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DATE DISTR. 23 Feb. 1964**SUBJECT** Resettlement of Population of
Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast**NO. OF PAGES** 5 50X1**DATE OF INFORMATION****PLACE ACQUIRED****THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION**

1. In 1943 the 95th Border Guards Regiment was deployed to protect the rear of the North Caucasian Army Group (North Caucasian Front) in the Kuban' region. In September 1943 the regimental headquarters was in (Stanitsa) Kholm'skaya N 44-51, E 38-24. In early October the regimental CO received from Col. FADEYEV, the Commander of Security Troops of the Rear Area, North Caucasian Army Group (Nachal'nik voysk po okhrane tyl'a severo kavkazskogo fronta), an order to proceed with the regiment to Cherkessk N 44-14, E 42-03 for completion of a very important assignment (Osobo vazhnogo pravitel'stvennogoza daniya). Several days later the regiment was transported to Cherkessk on freight trains. We remained in Cherkessk for one or two days and then received orders to proceed, on foot, as follows:

- a. Regimental Headquarters and 1st Battalion to Verkhnyaya Mara N 43-47, E 42-09.
- b. 2nd Battalion to Nizhnyaya Mara
- c. 3rd Battalion to Dzhegutinskiy N 43-57, E 42-03 which, as far as I can remember, was the seat of administration of Kharachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast /See Enclosure A/. At that time Dzhegutinskiy had another name which I do not recall.

2. The regimental CO was Lt. Col. UMANETS; the CO of the 1st Battalion was Maj. Feodor Ivanovich GERASIMENKO; the CO of the 2nd Battalion was Maj. SALT'YKOV; and the CO of the 3rd Battalion was Maj. CHERTOV. These men were regular officers of the Border Troops. The regiment at that time was composed of three battalions of four to five zastavy (of 40 men each); one command platoon and one maneuver group. Total strength was 800-900 men.

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3. It was my impression that Lt. Col. UMANETS did not know what kind of assignment the regiment would get until it had reached Cherkessk. At least he did not inform his subordinates. And only in Cherkessk did he receive final instructions. Several days after the arrival of troops at the destinations mentioned in paragraph 17 he held a briefing in Verkhnyaya Mara which was attended by regimental and battalion staff officers and political personnel. At this briefing the entire population of Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast was to be resettled. [redacted] reconnoiter thoroughly the regions assigned to battalions, to prepare exact lists of inhabitants of all villages and settlements, and to account for every individual on the territory of the oblast. Furthermore, [redacted] to dig trenches and machine gun emplacements around inhabited localities and commanding heights and to train troops in night and day alerts. [redacted] forbidden to inform the enlisted personnel as to the real purpose of our stay in Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast, and [redacted] for all purposes this change of station was supposed to be for reorganization and combat training of units taken from the front lines. The same information was given to the local authorities and the population of Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast.
4. Several weeks following the briefing held by the regimental CO in Verkhnyaya Mara were devoted to minute preparations of the pending operation. Except for several larger villages, such as Verkhnyaya Mara and Dzhegutinskiy, neither of which had more than 100 households, the territory assigned to the 95th Regiment was made up of many small settlements and mountain stations where sheep grazed. These several weeks were used also for the preparation of a list of inhabitants of every locality and to determine the exact whereabouts of every person. The lists were prepared by local territorial NKVD representatives under the supervision of 60-70 NKVD or NKGB operational personnel (operativnyy sostav) who had been sent from other USSR republics and from Moscow. Some of them belonged to the State Security (GosBezopasnost'). I do not know who was in charge of the entire operation in Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast, but in Verkhnyaya Mara at that time there was a Commissar of State Security, Third Class (Komissar Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti Tret'yego Ranga), equivalent to the rank of brigadier general, whose name I do not recall, who had arrived from Moscow. This man supervised preparations on the territory of the 95th Regiment, and several times he went out to inspect the preparations carried out by some other units which were supposed to participate in the resettlement operation.
5. When the lists were completed, a detailed breakdown was made for transportation purposes, and 12-15 inhabitants were assigned to a truck. The trucking columns were supposed to arrive on the eve of the operation. The destination of the truck transport was Cherkessk, from where deportation was to be by rail. The preparations for the resettlement had been disguised to such an extent that the population did not have even the slightest idea of what was going to happen. Through this period troops were stationed in inhabited localities, school buildings, and private houses, unrestrictedly mixing with the local population during their free time.
6. The disposition of troops had been planned very carefully to cover every inhabited locality in the area simultaneously in order to prevent anyone from slipping through the net. Every officer knew his exact duty, but the enlisted men had not been informed. Finally, at the end of October or early in November 1943, 24 hours prior to the beginning of the operation, the executive order arrived. On this day the troops were informed of the task and cautioned not to reveal it in any way to the inhabitants.

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7. The operation was to start at sunrise. During the night all villages in the lowland were surrounded by armed troops in trenches, and all roads and paths were blocked. The actual roundup of people was planned to be done by NKVD operational personnel assisted by members of the 95th Regiment. Each NKVD operational officer was given several soldiers of the 95th Regiment to help him. On the eve of the operation these small groups, always headed by an NKVD operational officer, were sent to cover all inhabited localities in the mountains and to block the mountain paths. During the night a large number of trucks arrived from Cherkessk and were sent to individual villages and mountain collecting points where they were hidden.

8. [redacted] Verkhnyaya Mara with instructions to escort the people taken from the hills to the collecting points and to prevent the inhabitants of Verkhnyaya Mara from leaving the village during the operation. At sunrise the NKVD operational officers and some junior officers of the 95th Regiment together with the attached groups of soldiers were sent to the village sections (usually three or four houses) assigned to them. Soldiers were stationed in front of the doors and by the windows of each house in order to prevent the escape of the occupants, and the officer in charge of the detail accompanied by one soldier went into the house and collected the entire family in one room. The officer then read the decree regarding the resettlement of the population of Karachayevo-Cherkessk Autonomous Oblast. I do not remember the exact wording of this decree, but the gist of it was as follows:

"For the treacherous attitude towards the USSR prior to and during the German-Fascist occupation, for sabotaging Soviet war operations, and for collaboration with German-Fascist invading armies, the population of Karachayevo-Cherkessk Autonomous Oblast is to be immediately resettled in a distant area of the USSR."

After reading the proclamation the officer then informed the family that they would have one hour to pack and that they would be allowed to take along 100 kg. of their belongings; that at the expiration of the hour they would be forcibly transported to the collecting point whether they were ready or not. The officer also informed the family that the village was entirely surrounded by armed soldiers, that any attempt to resist deportation would be suppressed by arms. The officer and soldiers remained in or close to the house to supervise the preparations for travel.

9. At first the people could not understand the meaning of this proclamation; they could not believe it was true. Quite a number of them who did not know Russian did not understand the proclamation. Once aware of what was in store for them, however, the population raised a great commotion. Screams, laments, and curses filled the air. A number of women fainted and had to be revived with cold water; children cried, attempted to run away, and hid themselves in cattle sheds or barns. At the end of the hour, the trucks drove close to the houses and all inhabitants of the village were forcibly loaded on them with their bundles of clothing, bedding, and food. They were driven to the Cherkessk railroad station. There were no cases of open resistance. Each truck was commanded by an NKVD operational officer who rode next to the driver, and three or four soldiers of the 95th Regiment were used as an escort on each truck. By 1600 hours the same day the operation was completed. From the area assigned to the 95th Regiment alone about 300 families (1,800 people) were deported.

10. At the time the operation was being carried out we did not know where these people were to be resettled. Eventually we learned that they were taken by rail either to Kazakh SSR or to Kirgiz SSR.

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11. It is significant that the decree ordering the deportation of the people of Karachayevskaya Autonomous Oblast applied to all members of this national group, regardless of their political records or positions. For this reason members of village, rayon, and oblast Party Committees and members of executive Party agencies (Sel' Soviet, RayIspolkom, and Oblast Government) were deported together with the farmers and workers. Members of the USSR armed forces who belonged to this national group and were on leave at home met the same fate. Not only that, but all members of the USSR armed forces of Karachayev nationality serving anywhere in the USSR (even those at the front), enlisted men and officers alike, were demobilized right after the deportation. They were escorted to the responsible headquarters of security troops of the rear area, and from there they were sent to the area assigned to the Karachayev national group.
12. In addition to the 95th Border Guard Regiment, the 26th Border Guard Regiment, which was employed somewhere in the area close to Cherkessk, and several units of NKVD interior troops (Vnutrenniye Voyska NKVD) also helped in the deportation of the Karachayev national group.
13. Simultaneously with the deportation operation, plans were made to bring new settlers from central oblasts of the RSFSR to Karachayevskaya Oblast. However, there was a delay of approximately five days before the new settlers arrived, during which time the region was open to pilferage and marauding. However, a large number of cattle which had been left unattended had perished in the meantime.
14. It is hard to say whether the soldiers participating in this deportation operation were dissatisfied with the method of its execution, or if a great number were disgusted with the ruthlessness of the Soviet regime. This was the first operation of its kind during World War II in the USSR (except for the deportation of the Volga Ethnic German group) and it took place shortly after the Germans had been thrown out of the area. It was not healthy for officers or enlisted men to talk about their experiences in this operation. I believe, though, that at that time, in the heat of war, young people did not think the operation was unjust or ruthless. The troops had not been stationed in this area during the fighting against the Germans, and they took for granted what the government said, i.e., that Karachayevtsy collaborated with the Germans, were traitors, and had received a deserved punishment. The older people who had families, and especially those who had children, probably felt otherwise.

ENCLOSURE:

- A. Area of Operation of the 95th Border Guards Regiment in Karachayevskaya Oblast in November 1943

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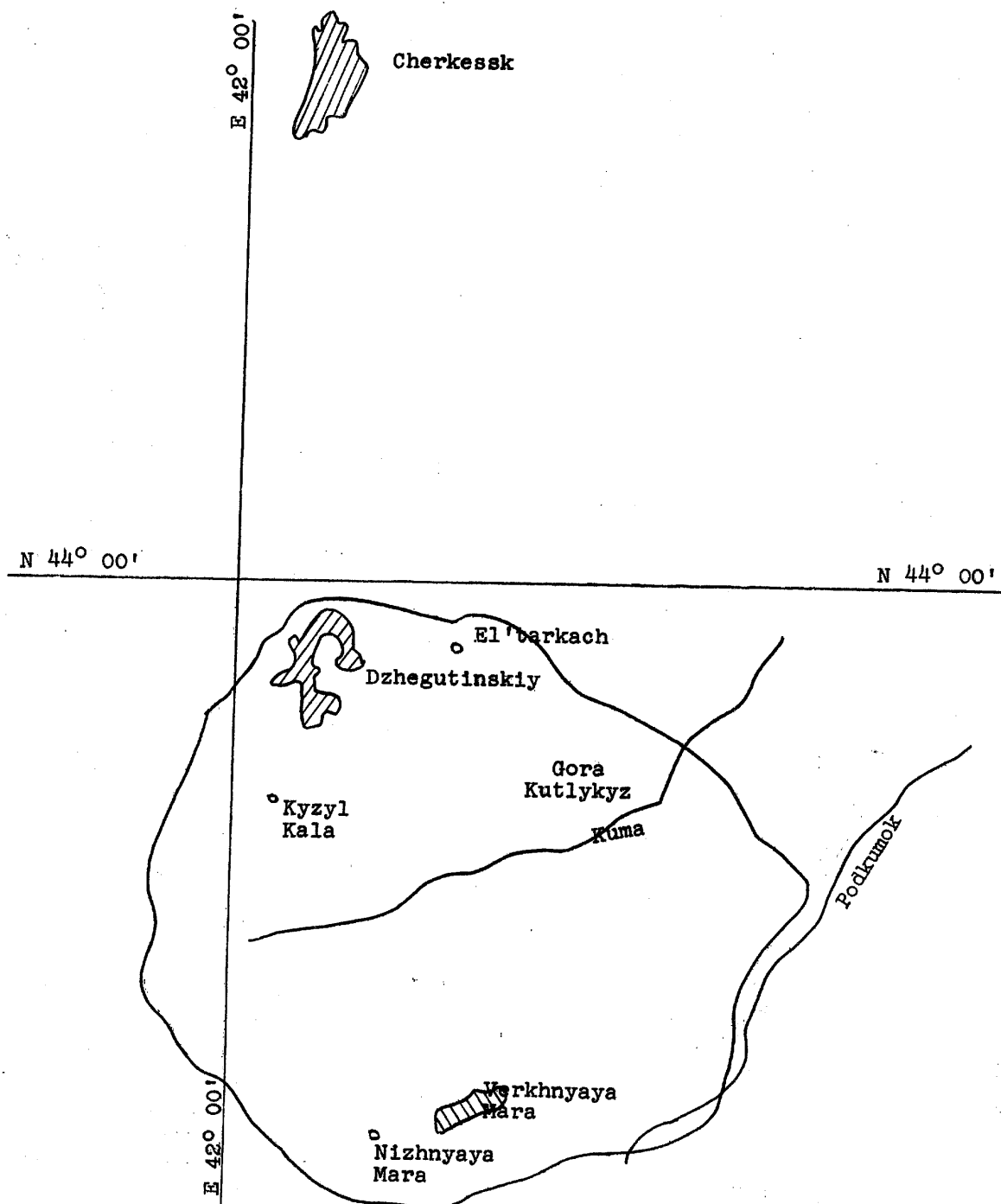
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ENCLOSURE A:

Area of Operation of the 95th Border Guards Regiment in Karachayevskaya Oblast in November 1943

Maps: N4 38-10, NK 38-1, A.M.S. Series N501, Scale 1:250,000



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